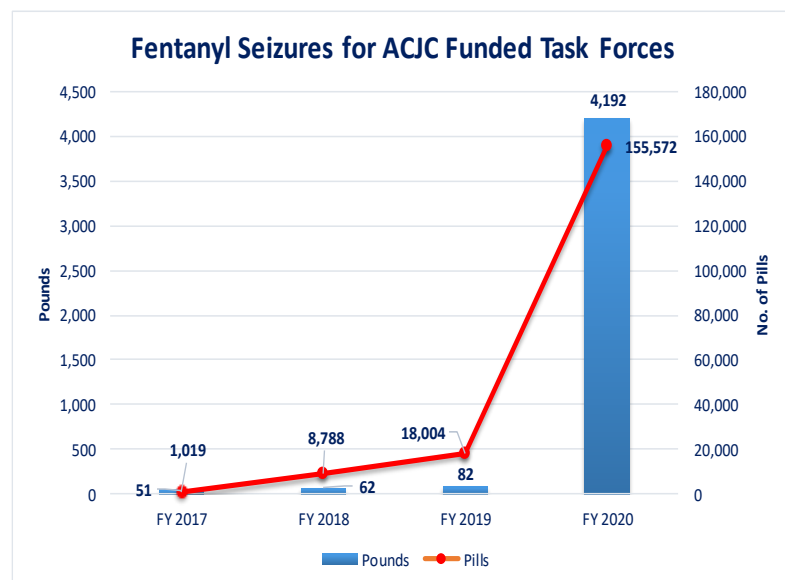


September 2021



## ACJC Funded Drug Task Forces Aggressively Seizing Illegal Fentanyl

As Arizonan's read the headlines "Largest fentanyl seizure in history", "75,000 fentanyl seized", "Over one million deadly fentanyl pills seized by DEA Phoenix and Arizona law enforcement this year", "As fentanyl seizures rise, so do safety concerns around the deadly drug" and "Fentanyl seizures skyrocket at AZ border as deaths from drug double in U.S." they may wonder how much of an impact these seizures are really making and are our communities any safer.



With over a 765% increase in fentanyl seizures between 2019 and 2020, ACJC funded drug task forces are not taking a lax stance going after this highly deadly illegal drug.

Even with this aggressive approach to seizures of fentanyl, much more needs to be done. ACJC's Drug, Gang, and Violent Crime Control program provides funding to drug task forces around the state to combat illegal drug use. The goal of each task force is to deter, investigate, prosecute, adjudicate and punish drug offenders. This past year, the Commission awarded \$3.2 million to 14 drug task forces across the state.

Additionally, through Substance Abuse Coalition Leaders of Arizona's (SACLA) efforts, there is a significant education process going on across the state to educate our schools,

and our communities about the dangers and what to look for should anyone come into contact with this deadly drug.

There are now protections in place for anyone who witnesses an individual experiencing an overdose should they aggressively seek to find medical help for the individual. On January 25, 2018, Governor Ducey signed the Arizona Opioid Epidemic Act, which took effect on April 26, 2018. Within the Act, it includes sober living homes, education for medical students, as well as creating a Good Samaritan provision, which excludes those seeking medical help from prosecution for drugs or drug paraphernalia located by police at that time.

Within the Arizona Revised Statutes 13-3423 it address the prohibited prosecution of Good Samaritans. It states, "A person who, in good faith, seeks medical assistance for someone who is experiencing a drug-related overdose may not be charged or prosecuted for the possession or use of a controlled substance or drug paraphernalia or a preparatory offense if the evidence for the violation was gained as a result of the person's seeking medical assistance."

For more information about the Substance Abuse Coalition Leaders of Arizona, visit [www.saclaz.org](http://www.saclaz.org) or [SACLAZ - SACLA](http://www.saclaz.org)

Graph source: ACJC 2020 EDGE Report [FY 2020 EDGE Report FINAL.pdf \(azcjc.gov\)](#)

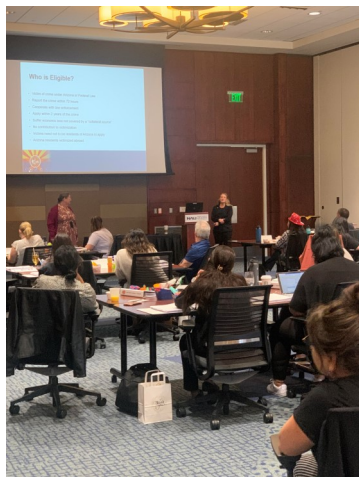


## ACJC Team Heads Back to School

ACJC Victim Services Program staff went "Back to School" last month at the Arizona Victim Assistance Academy's Basic Academy. The Basic Academy was held August 9th-13th, where ACJC staff provided training on Arizona's Crime Victim Compensation Program to the 38 advocates in attendance. The Arizona Victim Assistance Academy is a project of the Arizona Coalition for Victim Services (ACVS), a non-profit made up of crime victims service providers. One of the main goals of ACVS is to provide training and networking opportunities to agencies that provide services to crime victims. ACVS is a current ACJC Crime Victim Assistance Grant Program award recipient for Victim Assistance Trainings that they provide.

The Basic Academy is designed for advocates new to victim services and is structured to teach participants basic advocacy skills. The Basic Academy curriculum addresses topics such as victimology, crisis theory and response, the criminal justice system, victims' rights, and cultural awareness. Additionally, experienced service providers and educators from across the state lead participants through an examination of various crime types, including homicide, domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, drunk driving, and vulnerable adult abuse in an effort to impart a better understanding of the barriers people face as they strive to overcome their victimization and heal. The 40-hour Basic Academy curriculum meets the requirements for the National Advocate Credentialing Program and the Military Advocate Certificate Program pre-service training through the National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA).

For more information on ACVS Training opportunities, please visit their website at <http://www.azcvns.net/trainings/>





# SPOTLIGHT

## Arizona's Drug Task Forces

### Yuma Task Force

Since 1987, the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission has provided funding under the Drug, Gang, and Violent Crime Control Grant (DGVCC) to enhance efforts to deter, investigate, prosecute, adjudicate and punish drug offenders. The grant comprises federal, state, and local funding awarded by the Commission each year on a competitive basis. In F.Y. 2020, the Commission awarded \$3.2 million to 14 drug task forces across the state to reduce drug activity and/or drug-related street gang activity.

In 2020, the Yuma County Narcotics Task Force received \$241,556 in Federal Byrne/JAG funding, state, and local matching funds.

The Yuma County Narcotics Task Force addresses street to mid-level narcotics enforcement in Yuma County and includes Yuma, Somerton, San Luis, and Wellton. Staffed with experienced investigators, the task force conducts professional investigations utilizing time-tested and proven techniques, including surveillance operations, intensive street-level interdiction, informants, and search warrants.

The Yuma County Narcotics Task Force is a multi-agency task force initially established in 1987 as the Southwest Border Alliance. The lead agency is the Yuma County Sheriff's Office. In addition, the Yuma Police Department, U.S. Border Patrol, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and the Yuma County Attorney's Office all provide assigned personnel to the Task Force. Situated in the southwest corner of Arizona, Yuma County is unique because it shares a common border with California and the states of Baja and Sonora, Mexico. The 120-mile border Yuma County shares with Mexico is a primarily remote desert area with limited law enforcement. These factors combine to make the area extremely attractive to drug trafficking organizations (DTO).



The most significant drug threat that Yuma's Narcotics Task Force has been addressing is methamphetamines. In 2020, the agency seized 387 lbs of meth, and in 2021, Yuma's task force seized 703 lbs, a 82% increase over the previous year.

*Continued on page 4*



## **CONGRESS PASSES THE VOCA FIX TO SUSTAIN THE CRIME VICTIMS FUND ACT** **Provides Some Relief for Victim Compensation Programs Nationwide**

Over the last few years VOCA funding has been decreasing and the ability to assist victims of crime has suffered.

On Thursday, July 22, 2021, President Biden signed the VOCA Fix To Sustain the Crime Victims Fund Act of 2021 in a historic effort to stabilize the Crime Victims' Fund. Among other provisions, this law-

- Requires funds collected by the Federal Government under deferred and non-prosecution agreements to be deposited into the Crime Victims Fund;
- Increases the percentage that state victim compensation programs are reimbursed by the Federal Government from 60% to 75%;
- Removes the restitution recovery penalty from annual state compensation certification forms.

Most importantly, the VOCA Fix will restore vital funding to the Crime Victims Fund, which provides federal grant funding for state victim compensation and assistance programs. The fund provides critical support and services to crime victims, and the VOCA fix will allow Arizona and other states to continue to serve crime victims for years to come.

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*Continued from page 3*

The agency prides itself on its multi-jurisdictional drug traffic intelligence gathering and partnerships with local, national, and international law enforcement agencies. A recent example highlighting this coordinated effort occurred during the summer and fall of 2020 when the Yuma County Narcotics Task Force was contacted to assist agents with Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) and Border Patrol. In each case, information was received after agents observed packages flown over the Arizona/Mexico border to residences in San Luis, Arizona. Based on intelligence provided by various agencies, agents were able to conduct surveillance operations on the targets. As a result, the task force executed search warrants and recovered 35.39 pounds of methamphetamine, 6.02 pounds of fentanyl, and a .357 revolver. Additionally, three arrests were made, and intelligence obtained was forwarded to other federal agencies for additional follow-up.



The combined funding received from Byrne JAG and the state is critical to the task force's success. It allows the agency to maintain staffing levels to ensure that the task force remains a viable force in Yuma county and assists other task forces throughout the state.



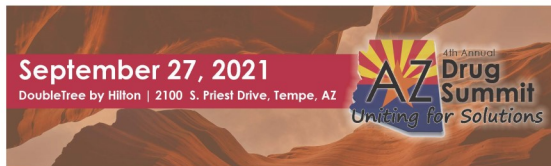


## Don't Miss Out on the Latest Arizona Youth Survey Results

Over the last year, ACJC has been working diligently developing and now launching the Data Visualization Center (DVC). The DVC houses a number of data dashboards that include statistical reports on our Drug, Gang & Crime Control program, Deaths in Custody, Victim Assistance program, and the Arizona Youth Survey.

Today, we launched the next storyboard on the Arizona Youth Survey dashboard, including substance use data and attitudes about high-risk factors.

Why might this data be vital to you or your family? The Arizona Youth Survey (AYS) is administered every two years to a statewide sample of 8th, 10th, and 12th-grade youth under the direction of the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission Statistical Analysis Center and in partnership with the Arizona State University School of Criminology & Criminal Justice. Based on the nationally recognized Risk and Protective Factor model and the Communities That Care survey (Hawkins et al., 1992), the AYS assesses the prevalence and frequency of youth substance use, gang involvement, and other risky behaviors and helps stakeholders to better understand the risk and protective factors that are correlated with these behaviors.



### Keynote Speakers



**Jerry Moe**  
National Director of  
Children's Programs,  
Hazelden Betty Ford Center  
Advisory Board Member,  
National Association for  
Children of Addiction  
*Changing the Family Legacy:  
Giving children a safe place  
to grow, heal and get better*



**Will Jones**  
Communications and  
Outreach Associate,  
Smart Approaches to  
Marijuana  
*Social Justice Issues Related  
to Marijuana*

### Topics Include

- Understanding the Drug Crisis in the Age of Fentanyl and Coronavirus
- Finding a New Home to Strengthen Recovery Success
- Planning, Implementing and Regulating Marijuana Legalization
- Kratom and Other Novel Drugs: 5 Things to Know
- Law Enforcement Trends, Challenges, and Successes
- Expanding Medical Services, Treatment and Support for Vulnerable Populations
- Combating Impacts of the Overdose Epidemic Through Trauma-Informed Approaches and Partnerships
- Community Approaches to Address Fentanyl, Counterfeit Pills and Stimulant Use

**COME TOGETHER** Change begins when we come together. The Arizona Drug Summit is Arizona's gathering place for learning, networking, and creating partnerships that will change lives. We encourage you to join us and become part of the solution to reduce addiction, overdoses and death in our state.

Register today at  
[AZDrugSummit.org](http://AZDrugSummit.org)

**NEW!** 2 ways to participate:

- In-Person \$50
- Virtual \$25



**There is still time to  
register for the**

**Arizona Drug Summit**

**September 27.2021**

**Double Tree Hilton**

**Visit: [www.azdrugsummit.org](http://www.azdrugsummit.org)**

## Contact Us

Arizona Criminal Justice Commission  
1110 W. Washington Suite 230  
Phoenix, Arizona 85007  
Phone: 602-364-1147

[www.azcjc.gov](http://www.azcjc.gov)



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